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EXAMINER

HOM, SHICK C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2666

DATE MAILED: 07/28/2004

5

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/734,768

Applicant(s)

GUATA, HAIM

Examiner

Shick C Hom

Art Unit

2666

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12/13/00 & 4/1/03.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

Art Unit: 2666

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

Drawings

2. Figures 1 and 2 should be designated by a legend such as -- Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

3. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) because they fail to show the pre-defined sequence of signals that are

Art Unit: 2666

indicative of a malfunction at the transmission path, The AIS message, the routing means, the optical fiber, digital microwave, satellite route, the pair of compressing/decompressing devices as described in the specification. Any structural detail that is essential for a proper understanding of the disclosed invention should be shown in the drawing. MPEP § 608.02(d). Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required

Art Unit: 2666

corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

4. Claims 2-14 and 16-28 objected to because of the following informalities: In claims 2-14, 25 line 1, the words "A device" seem to refer back to "a device" recited in claim 1 line 1. If this is true, it is suggested changing "A device" to ---The device---. In claims 18-19, 26, 27 line 1, the words "A digital" seem to refer back to "a digital" recited in claims 16, 17, 15 line 1, respectively. If this is true, it is suggested changing "A digital" to ---The digital---. In claims 22, 24, 28 line 1, the words "A method" seem to refer back to "a method" recited in claims 21, 23, 20 line 1, respectively. If this is true, it is suggested changing "A method" to ---The method---. In claims 9-13 line 3, the words "a pre-defined sequence" seem to refer back to "a pre-defined sequence" recited in claim 1 lines 5-6. If this is true, it is suggested changing "a pre-defined sequence" to ---the pre-defined sequence---. In claims 9, 11-12 line 4, the words "a packet" seem to refer back to "a packet" recited in claim 3 line 2. If this is true, it is suggested changing "a packet" to ---the packet---. In claim 16 lines 15-16, the words "a first number" seem to refer back to "a

Art Unit: 2666

first number" recited in claim 16 lines 9-10. If this is true, it is suggested changing "a first number" to ---the first number---. In claim 17 lines 7-8 delete "said transmitting means" and insert ---said transmission means---. In claim 18 line 7 delete "at least one pair" and insert ---the at least one pair---. In claim 18 line 8 delete "at at least" and insert ---at least---. In claim 20 line 11 and claim 23 line 25 delete "such a pre-defined pattern" and insert ---said pre-defined pattern---. Appropriate correction is required. In claim 21 line 10 delete "such a sequence" and insert ---said sequence---. In claim 21 line 15 delete "a sequence" and insert ---said sequence---. In claim 23 line 19 delete "a transmission path" and insert ---the transmission path---. In claims 25, 27-28 line 3 correct typo by deleting "froup" and insert ---group---. In claim 20 line 8 delete typo "occurringin" and insert ---occurring in. In claims 25-28 lines 3-4 spell out acronyms low-delay code excited linear prediction LD-CELP, conjugate-structure algebraic-code excited linear prediction CS-ACELP, algebraic code excited linear prediction A-CELP, Qualcomm code excited linear prediction Q-CELP, voice code excited linear prediction A-CELP, and enhanced code excited linear prediction E-CELP.

Art Unit: 2666

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. Claims 11, 18 and 22-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 18 lines 4-5 and 9-10 which recite "the transmission network" lacks clear antecedent basis because no transmission network have been previously recited in the claims and therefore the limitation is not clearly understood. In claim 22 line 6 which recite "said pre-defined pattern of signals" lacks clear antecedent basis. In claim 23 lines 4-5 which recite "the operative transmitting means," line 9 which recite "the transmission destination," lines 11-12 which recite "the transmission path," line 13 which recite "the other and the rate," line 16 which recite "the rate" lack clear antecedent basis. In claims 25-28 lines 1-2 which recite "the alarm message" lack clear antecedent basis. Claim 11 appears to be the duplicate of claim 9 and therefore is not clear what further limitation is being claimed that is not already in claim 9.

Art Unit: 2666

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1-6, 9-15, 17, 19-21, and 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakayama (5,553,057).

Regarding claim 1:

Nakayama discloses the device operative in a digital communication system and adapted to receive digital signals and transmit them along a transmission path (see col. 1 lines 16-43 which recite the digital network including the ATM cell), characterized in that said device is capable of preventing the transmission of a message comprising a pre-defined sequence of signals that are indicative of a malfunction occurred at said transmission path (see col. 9 lines 29-38 which recite generating an AIS signal at the occurrence of loss of service, i.e. malfunction, and the abstract and col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells when the alarm indication signal AIS is detected).

Art Unit: 2666

Regarding claim 15:

Nakayama discloses the digital telecommunication station adapted to operate in a digital communication system (see col. 1 lines 16-43 which recite the digital network including the ATM cell), and comprising: at least one receiving means adapted to receive digital signals; at least one controller adapted to receive a group of digital signals and determine whether said group comprises a message comprising a pre-defined pattern (see col. 4 lines 34-59 which recite receiving the signal and analyzing the signal to discriminate whether it is an AIS clearly anticipate the receiving means and controller for determining whether the message comprises a pre-defined pattern); at least one routing means controlled by said at least one controller and adapted to allow transmission of the digital signals (see col. 1 lines 25-29 which recite the router), provided that said group of digital signals does not comprise the message comprising the pre-defined pattern; and at least one transmitting means adapted to receive signals from said routing means and transmit them (see Fig. 1 which shows the receiving side ATM unit receiving signals from the transmission side ATM unit including the signal sending section and col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells if the alarm indication signal AIS is detected).

Art Unit: 2666

Regarding claim 17:

Nakayama discloses the digital communication system (see col. 1 lines 16-43 which recite the digital network), comprising: transmission means at least a first end of a transmission network for transmitting digital signals; receiving means at least a second end of the transmission network; a transmission path connecting said transmitting means with said receiving means (in Fig. 1 see the transmission unit, the ATM exchange, receiving unit, and path connecting the transmitting and receiving units); and at least one controlling means operative along said transmission path and adapted to prevent receipt of a transmission of a message comprising a pre-defined pattern, by said receiving means (see col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells if the alarm indication signal AIS is detected).

Regarding claim 20:

Nakayama discloses the method for use in a digital communication system (see col. 1 lines 16-43 which recite the digital network) which method comprises: (i) receiving digital signals transmitted along a transmission path (in Fig. 1 see the transmission unit, the ATM exchange, receiving unit, and path connecting the transmitting and receiving units); (ii) determining whether the digital signals received comprise a

Art Unit: 2666

pre-defined pattern that characterizes a message generated as a result of a malfunction occurring in said digital communication system (see col. 4 lines 34-59 which recite receiving the signal and analyzing the signal to discriminate whether it is an AIS and col. 9 lines 29-38 which recite generating an AIS signal at the occurrence of loss of service, i.e. malfunction); (iii) transmitting the digital signals as long as no such a pre-defined pattern is detected; and (iv) preventing the transmission of digital signals along the transmission path in the event that said pre-defined pattern is detected (see col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells if the alarm indication signal AIS is detected).

Regarding claim 21:

Nakayama discloses the method for use in a digital communication system (see col. 1 lines 16-43 which recite the digital network) comprising: (i) receiving encoded digital signals transmitted along a transmission path (in Fig. 1 see the transmission unit, the ATM exchange, receiving unit, and path connecting the transmitting and receiving units and in Figs. 6 and 14 see the encoder and decoder); (ii) determining whether the encoded digital signals received comprise a sequence of pre-defined number of consecutive bits each having the value of

Art Unit: 2666

1 (see col. 4 lines 34-59 which recite receiving the signal and analyzing the signal to discriminate whether it is an AIS and Col. 13 line 65 to col. 14 line 2 which recite the AIS signal having bit value of all "1"); (iii) decoding the encoded digital signals as long as no such a sequence is detected and forwarding then towards a receiving end of the transmission path (in Figs. 6 and 14 see the encoder and decoder); and (iv) preventing the transmission of decoded digital signals along the transmission path in the event that a sequence of pre-defined number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 was detected (see col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells if the alarm indication signal AIS is detected).

Regarding claim 23:

Nakayama discloses the method for use in a digital communication system (see col. 1 lines 16-43 which recite the digital network), which method comprises: (i) transmitting a message comprising a sequence of characters identifying the operative transmitting means, the type of signals to be transmitted and their destination (see col. 4 lines 34-59 which recite receiving the signal and analyzing the signal to discriminate whether it is an AIS message clearly anticipate transmitting a message identifying the operative transmitting means); (ii) establishing a communication link between a first

Art Unit: 2666

transmitting means and a receiving means at the transmission destination (in Fig. 1 see the transmission unit, the ATM exchange, receiving unit, and path connecting the transmitting and receiving units); (iii) exchanging signals between a pair of telecommunication stations operative along the transmission path, identifying for each one the existence of the other and the rate for transmitting signals therebetween (see col. 13 lines 25-51 which recite receiving and storing a predetermined amount of data for a predetermined clock value, i.e. time, clearly reads on identifying the rate); (iv) transmitting information signals in their encoded form at the rate defined along a transmission path; (v) receiving encoded digital signals transmitted along a transmission path (in Figs. 6 and 14 see the encoder and decoder); (vi) determining whether the encoded digital signals received comprise a pre-defined pattern that is reserved for an alarm message in said digital communication system (see col. 4 lines 34-59 which recite receiving and analyzing the signal to discriminate whether it is an AIS); (vii) decoding the encoded digital signals as long as no such a pre-defined pattern is detected; (viii) preventing the transmission of decoded digital signals along the transmission path following the event that said pre-defined pattern was detected (see col. 9 lines 29-38 which recite generating an AIS

Art Unit: 2666

signal at the occurrence of loss of service, i.e. malfunction, and the abstract and col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells when the alarm indication signal AIS is detected).

Regarding claim 2:

Nakayama discloses wherein said message is an AIS message (see abstract and col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite the AIS signal).

Regarding claim 3:

Nakayama discloses wherein said message is comprised within a payload of a packet in a packetized type of transmission (see Fig. 5 and col. 10 lines 28-38 which recite the payload region of the ATM cell).

Regarding claim 4:

Nakayama discloses the device adapted to receive coded digital signals and decode them into their decoded digital output signals (in Figs. 6 and 14 see the encoder and decoder), characterized in that when receiving a bit stream of at least a first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1, is capable of preventing the transmission of said bit stream further along the transmission path (see col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells if the alarm indication signal AIS is detected and col. 13 line 65 to

Art Unit: 2666

col. 14 line 2 which recite the AIS signal having bit value of all "1").

Regarding claim 5:

Nakayama discloses wherein the coded digital signals received are selected from the group consisting of voice signals, fax signals, data signals, voiceband data signals and video signals (see col. 1 lines 17-24 which recite voice, data and image information).

Regarding claim 6:

Nakayama discloses wherein the signals received are voice signals (see col. 1 lines 17-24 which recite voice, data and image information).

Regarding claims 9-13:

Nakayama disclose wherein the prevention of transmission of said message comprising a pre-defined sequence of signals is done by discarding or replacing a packet, a frame comprising said message (see Fig. 4 which shows the frame structure of the signal and col. 1 lines 39-43 which recite switching ATM cells clearly reads on a packet).

Regarding claim 14:

Nakayama disclose wherein the replacing message is dependent on the contents of a message preceding the message that comprises said pre-defined sequence of signals and the

Art Unit: 2666

contents of a message following the message that comprises said pre-defined sequence of signals (see col. 14 lines 7-42 which recite the position of the violation signal).

Regarding claim 19:

Nakayama discloses wherein said transmission path comprises a member selected from the group comprising of optical fiber, digital microwave and satellite route (see col. 13 lines 8-20 which recite the optical/electrical section and the optical signal).

Regarding claim 22:

Nakayama disclose the step of (v) resuming the transmission of digital signals along said transmission path following the removal of the cause for initiating said pre-defined pattern of signals (see col. 11 lines 1-10 which recite stopping the transmitting process for a period of time only).

Regarding claim 24:

Nakayama disclose the step of (ix) awaiting for the cause for initiating said alarm message is removed; and (x) resuming transmission of decoded digital signals along said transmission path (see col. 11 lines 1-10 which recite stopping the transmitting process for a period of time only).

Art Unit: 2666

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 16, 18, and 25-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakayama (5,553,057) in view of Cox et al. (5,434,920).

Regarding claims 16:

Nakayama discloses the digital telecommunication station adapted to operate in a digital communication system (see col. 1 lines 16-43 which recite the digital network including the ATM cell), and comprising at least one pair of devices each adapted to encode/decode digital signals received (see the encoder/decoder in Figs. 6 and 14) and; at least one controller adapted to receive a bit stream of encoded digital signals and determine whether said bit stream comprises at least a first

Art Unit: 2666

number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 (see col. 4 lines 34-59 which recite receiving the signal and analyzing the signal to discriminate whether it is an AIS and Col. 13 line 65 to col. 14 line 2 which recite the AIS signal having bit value of all "1"); at least one router controlled by said at least one controller and adapted to allow transmission of the digital signals in their decoded form, provided that said bit stream does not comprise at least a first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 (see col. 1 lines 25-29 which recite the router, Fig. 1 which shows the receiving side ATM unit receiving signals from the transmission side ATM unit including the signal sending section and col. 4 lines 24-33 which recite means for stopping transmission of ATM cells if the alarm indication signal AIS is detected).

Regarding claim 18:

Nakayama discloses the digital communication system for interconnecting a plurality of telecommunication trunks via a transmission path, comprising: first transmission means at least a first end of the transmission network adapted for transmitting digital signals; at least one pair of telecommunication stations of Claim 16; and receiving means at least a second end of the transmission network (in Fig. 1 see the transmission unit, the

Art Unit: 2666

ATM exchange, receiving unit, and path connecting the transmitting and receiving units).

Regarding claims 25-28:

For claims 25-28, Nakayama disclose the method and device described in paragraphs 7 and 9 of this office action.

For claims 25-28, Nakayama disclose all the subject matter of the claimed invention with the exception of wherein the alarm message is a legitimate code in an algorithm selected from the group consisting of LO-CELP, CS-ACELP; E-CELP and A-CELP, Q-CELP, VCELP as recited in claims 25-28.

Cox et al. from the same or similar fields of endeavor teach that it is known to provide the alarm message being a legitimate code in an algorithm selected from the group consisting of LO-CELP, CS-ACELP; E-CELP and A-CELP, Q-CELP, VCELP (see col. 2 lines 31-40 and col. 12 lines 25-48 which recite compression provided by a code excited linear prediction CELP encoder/decoder). Thus, it would have been obvious to the person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the alarm message being a legitimate code in an algorithm selected from the group consisting of LO-CELP, CS-ACELP; E-CELP and A-CELP, Q-CELP, VCELP as taught by Cox et al. in the method and device of Nakayama. The alarm message being a legitimate code in an

Art Unit: 2666

algorithm selected from the group consisting of LO-CELP, CS-ACELP; E-CELP and A-CELP, Q-CELP, VCELP can be implemented by using compression provided by a code excited linear prediction CELP encoder/decoder of Cox et al. in the method and device of Nakayama. The motivation for having the alarm message being a legitimate code in an algorithm selected from the group consisting of LO-CELP, CS-ACELP; E-CELP and A-CELP, Q-CELP, VCELP as taught by Cox et al. in the device and method of Nakayama being that it provides more efficiency in the design because it uses standard compression algorithm for the voice data of Nakayama.

For claim 16, Nakayama discloses all the subject matter of the claimed invention with the exception of the compressing/decompressing devices as recited in claim 16.

Cox et al. from the same or similar fields of endeavor teach that it is known to provide the compressing/decompressing devices (see col. 2 lines 17-30). Thus, it would have been obvious to the person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the compressing/decompressing devices as taught by Cox et al. in the telecommunication station of Nakayama. The compressing/decompressing devices can be implemented by connecting compressing device of Cox et al. to the transmitter

Art Unit: 2666

and receiver, respectively of Nakayama. The motivation for using the compressing/decompressing devices as taught by Cox et al. in the telecommunication station of Nakayama being that it provides more efficiency and security for the system since the system can compress and encrypt speech data at the transmitting end.

10. Claims 7-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakayama (5,553,057) in view of Weeber et al. (5,210,762).

Regarding claims 7-8:

For claims 7-8, Nakayama disclose the device described in paragraph 7 of this office action.

For claims 7-8, Nakayama discloses all the subject matter of the claimed invention with the exception of wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is at least from about 10 bits as in claim 7 and wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is in the range of from at least about 20 to about 40 bits as in claim 8.

Weeber et al. from the same or similar fields of endeavor teach that it is known to provide wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is at least from about 10 bits and wherein said first number of consecutive bits

Art Unit: 2666

each having the value of 1 is in the range of from at least about 20 to about 40 bits (see col. 6 line 12 to col. 7 line 61 and Tables 1-2 which recite the AIS as being "1111111111111111"). Thus, it would have been obvious to the person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is at least from about 10 bits and wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is in the range of from at least about 20 to about 40 bits as taught by Weeber et al. in the device of Nakayama. The first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is at least from about 10 bits and wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is in the range of from at least about 20 to about 40 bits can be implemented by providing the AIS being concatenation of pointers of Weeber et al. in the device of Nakayama. The motivation for providing wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is at least from about 10 bits and wherein said first number of consecutive bits each having the value of 1 is in the range of from at least about 20 to about 40 bits as taught by Weeber et al. in the device of Nakayama being that it provides more robust hardware implementation of pointer interpretation.

Art Unit: 2666

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Guata discloses handling of certain messages in a telecommunication system.

Dent et al. disclose a method and system for the transmission, reception and processing of 4-level and 8-level signaling symbols.

Buckingham et al. disclose a method and apparatus for link state determination in voice over frame-relay networks.

12. Any response to this nonfinal action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9306, (for Technology Center 2600 only)

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington. VA., Sixth Floor (2600 Receptionist at (703) 305-4750).

Application/Control Number: 09/734,768
Art Unit: 2666

Page 23

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Shick Hom whose telephone number is (703) 305-4742. The examiner's regular work schedule is Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm EST and out of office on alternate Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Seema Rao, can be reached at (703) 308-5463.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center 2600 Customer Service Office whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JMS' or similar, located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

SH

July 21, 2004